

**Olympia  
First  
Baptist  
Church**

**Inside this issue:**

<b>Front Page: THE THIN PLACE</b>	
<b>THE THIN PLACE CONTINUED &amp; COMING ATTRACTIONS</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>GRADUATE LIST 2026</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>GRADUATE LIST cont. &amp; BLOCK PARTY THANK YOU</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>FROM THE PASTOR'S DESK</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>STATE OF THE CHURCH ADDRESS / PRESENTATION</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>Insert: JULY BIRTHDAYS, LADIES LUNCHEON</b>	
<b>DEACON'S CORNER, Pat Luhr</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>DICIPLESHIP PROJECT &amp; OLYMPIA COMMONS DAY CAMP REGISTR TION DEADLINE JULY 5</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>EVERGREEN REGION FUNDING REQUEST</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>CAMP BETHEL 2026 CALENDAR</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>JULY 2026 CALENDAR</b>	<b>11</b>

**The Thin Place:**

**Where the Sacred and the Ordinary Collide**

We find ourselves, within the Church calendar, what is called Ordinary Time. As we heard a few weeks ago, “ordinary,” does not mean dull, or humdrum. Taken from the Latin, *ordinal*, meaning “related to a series.” Let us then, think of Ordinary Time as a journey for the next 5 ½ months walking through the life and ministry of Jesus, with the writer of Matthew’s gospel as our Guide. This journey focuses on our growth and maturing as disciples/followers of Jesus. This is the hard, every day, one-foot-in-front-of-the-other, grunt work of discipleship. This means that there will be setbacks, stalls, progress, frustration and exhilaration, weaving in and out of our faith journey. I know! You can hardly wait!

We kicked off this season of Ordinary Time, a few weeks ago, by looking at the Calling of the tax collector, Matthew as well as Jesus’ encounter with a local religious leader, his dying child and a woman with a “blood” issue she had been dealing with for 12 years. What I find most compelling about this story, this series of stories, is what they tell us about how Jesus sees people. Ordinary people, like us, who are each dealing with their set of problems, issues, relationally, physically, and spiritually.

Matthew, the tax collector, works in cooperation and with the blessing and authority of the Roman Empire. That makes him a traitor to his people, a pariah within the community and ritually unclean. That he has been selected and called by Jesus to be a part of his inner circle, the religious elites, the Pharisees, are outraged with not only his choice of Matthew, but that Jesus openly ate, conversed, and was building relationships with Matthew, his co-workers, and other “sinners.” This interaction also makes Jesus ritually, “unclean,” as well. The Pharisees now have an expectation that Jesus will go through the proper steps of making himself ritually clean as outlined by the Law. Instead, Jesus says, if you’re well, you don’t need a doctor, only if you’re sick. Then, Jesus says, with some authority and from his chest: ***I desire mercy, not sacrifice.*** I think that’s Jesus’ way of saying, people are the priority. Relationships and building bridges into people’s lives are of the utmost importance and sometimes that means the rules will be broken. For Jesus, which means, for us as well, building bridges into people’s lives of relationship, inclusion, belonging, is the name of the game. He’s there for broken, hurting people, and guess what? That includes all of us, even those who look like they have it all together, who are highly thought of and “successful.” I encourage you to read through this story a few times and see how God’s Spirit, speaks to you through it. What are the implications that it has for what we, here on the corner of 9<sup>th</sup> and Washington should focus on as well as for you, personally?

I grew up in the late 60’s and 70’s when the “church” of Jesus Christ was much more a centralized fabric of American society. In those days, if you wanted to be a member of a faith community, you had to agree/believe in their “Statement of Beliefs.” In other words, if you “believed” in those things, then you could “belong,” and become a member. Once a member, you had voice and the freedom to decide for yourself, just how involved you wanted to be within the life of the church. The process was pretty clear:

Believe...Belong...Become.

*Continued pg 2...*

That was then. Today? Hmm. My faith journey; how I've seen God's story lived out, and intersecting within my own and other people's lives, leads me in a different direction. What I hear, see, experience is that people today are looking for a place of **belonging**. A space, and/or community, where they can be accepted, safe, find some purpose, along with good vibes, etc. In other words: A place where they **Belong**. The stories from Matthew, whether the call of Matthew, the Leader with a dying child, and/or the women with the bleeding issue, were outside the boundaries of being able to **belong**. They were considered unclean, relationally and spiritually outsiders, too tainted to belong to the standards of the community, especially, the religious community.

But Jesus...you remember Jesus, right? The ONE we call Savior, Lord, the Christ, the Resurrected, Holy One. The One we follow, serve, and love? Yeah, that One! Well, he creates pathways of inclusion. He tears down the barriers that exclude and says all belong within God's Kindom. It's why our invitation is simple and direct:

**Come and See! Followed by – Come...Belong!**

I firmly believe, that once someone decides to belong to what God is doing here on the corner of 9<sup>th</sup> and Washington, then God's Spirit works on the process of them becoming more Christ like. We, the community, will have some roll in that process of becoming, but primarily, that's God's job, not ours. And that "becoming," takes a lifetime. Who knows. One day that person, maybe you, will wake up and go: Holy crap...I believe! Instead of the old paradigm of:

Believe...Belong...Become; God's story within our 21<sup>st</sup> Century, North American context is telling us:

**Belong...Become...Believe!**

This is the starting point for our journey through this season of Ordinary Time.

Come and See!

Pastor Mark (Rev)

**Coming Attractions**

- \* Taste of Evergreen @ New Beginnings Christian Fellowship on **Saturday, August 8<sup>th</sup>**, 11 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. (Kent/Renton)
- \* Flourish Event, a World Relief Fund Raiser, **Saturday, August 8<sup>th</sup>** @ Hands-On Children's Museum beginning at 6:30 p.m.
- \* Listening Forum, **Wednesday, August 12<sup>th</sup>**, 5:45 p.m.—6:45 p.m. Location to be Determined
- \* Listening Forum, **Saturday, August 15<sup>th</sup>**, 11:00 a.m.—Noon, Location to be Determined
- \* Intergenerational Community Gathering (ICG) – POTLUCK! **Saturday, August 22<sup>nd</sup>** @ Pat DeNeui's, 4:30 p.m. to 6:15 p.m.
- \* Block Party, **Saturday, August 29<sup>th</sup>**, 4:00 to 6:00 p.m. @ Oly First!
- \* Camp Bethel Fundraiser, **Saturday, September 5<sup>th</sup>**, @ Oly First! 2:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m. More info to come!

## Graduate List – 2026



Wylie Nash – Tumwater High School  
Parents: David and Sara Nash; Grandmother: Becky Nash  
Wylie will be attending WyoTech, in Laramie, Wyoming.  
Wylie heads to Laramie the end of June.

Evelyn (Evie) McCreight – Pinecrest High School, Southern Pines, NC  
Parents: Devlyn and Sarah McCreight;  
Surrogate Grandparents: Vern and Emily Blair  
Evie will be attending East Carolina University, in the Fall.

Sophie Jonas – Olympia High School  
Parents: Peter & Jane Jonas; Grandparent: Yim Locke  
Sophie has also been doing Running Start and taking classes at SPSCC. She will finish those studies next year before transferring to Western Washington University, in Bellingham.

Addison (Addie) Williams – Chiang Rai International  
Christian School - CRICS - (Thailand)  
Parents: Kyle and Katrina Williams  
Addie will be attending the University of Arizona, in the Fall.



Sophia Sanders – Tumwater High School  
Parents: Lindsey Bates; Ryan Sanders  
Sophia will be attending SPSCC in the Fall.



Damian Marcelo Lopez – Olympia High School  
Parents: Rony (Omar) and Ana Lopez  
Abuella(s): Vern and Emily Blair  
Marcello will continue his studies and certification(s) in  
Auto Mechanics at South Puget Sound Community College.

LaLa Gonzalez – Olympia High School  
Abuella(s): Vern and Emily Blair  
LaLa will continue her education by pursuing a career in Nursing!

Shane Nelson – Capital High School  
Shane is the nephew of Jodi Honeysett  
Shane will be finishing his Running Start studies at SPSCC in the fall.

Kiley Marie Ditterline, granddaughter of Jancie and Bob Holcomb,  
graduated Summa Cum Laude from Rutherford County Virtual School  
and will be attending Lipscomb University in Nashville Tennessee  
this fall in their Honors Program majoring film production.

*Graduates cont. page 4...*

Hailey Nanney – Timberline High School

Hailey also graduated and received her Certified Nursing Assistant certification, with a pinning ceremony. Hailey plans to continue pursuing a Nursing career. Hailey is the granddaughter of Sandy Grebbs and the Great-granddaughter of Margie Johnson.



LaDarion Roberts – Tacoma Community College

LaDarion graduated June 20<sup>th</sup>, with Honors.

Congratulations!

Maya Nelson graduated from Oregon State University,  
with a Bachelor's of Science in Public Health!

Maya is the niece of Jodi Honeysett.

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### Block Party Thank You!

The block party we hosted on Saturday, June 13<sup>th</sup>, was, in my estimation, a really good success and turnout. It was warm, but not too much, even though the majority of folks found relief in the shade! Good food! Good entertainment. Games. Lots of conversations, with old and new friends. As one of our musicians said as he was leaving: **“we need more of these. More opportunities to come together!”** That from someone who is not a member of our church, but does a lot out in the community, and has a relationship with what our church does in building bridges out into the wider community. It was a good word for me to hear at the end of the day in accessing what had just taken place.

Want to thank, not only everyone who came out, but those Team members who headed up different aspects of the day:

Ricky and Carrie Bowman headed up the food:

A wonderful Taco bar, fresh fruit, cold drinks!

Melissa McKee headed up our publicity with flyers and Social Media presence as well as bringing in help/promotion from the Council of Neighborhood Associations.

Jay Nordgaard headed up games, with a big assist from our Energizer Bunny,  
Pat DeNeui!

Finally, Meggin Turk ran with putting together our live musical lineup!

We couldn't have done any of it without all the people who came to help with both setup and takedown, but also helped throughout the event if something needed to be done as well as engaged those who came to participate. As the old saying goes:

Teamwork makes the dream work!

Thank you for being part of our continuing ministry of building bridges into our wider neighborhood and community.



## From the Pastor's Desk

Often when I am asked what kind of Baptists are we, I usually smile and say:

***We're a different kind of Baptist!***

Normally, I say that with a smile. It is my light-hearted attempt to let people know that as an American Baptist congregation, we most likely will not fit whatever pre-conceived idea they might have, about what Baptists believe, practice, or most likely, who they will accept into their fellowship.

For those who may be unclear about who we are:

American Baptist Churches, USA., is the formal title of what kind of Baptists we are and affiliate with. We **ARE NOT** part of, or affiliated with, the Southern Baptist Convention. Why am I making that distinction and writing to you today?

Yesterday, the Southern Baptist Convention, the largest Protestant group within the United States, voted to limit the role of women in the church. Specifically, that women are not eligible/banned from being Pastors, Preachers, and/or Teachers of the scriptures, in their churches. This position by the SBC, and affirmed overwhelmingly by its delegates ***is not connected, in anyway***, with American Baptists Churches, USA, and certainly not here at Olympia First!

Historically, the northern tradition of Baptists, what is now American Baptist Churches, USA, separated from southern Baptists over theological and humanitarian disagreements around 1845, primarily over the practice of slavery and sending slave owners out into the world as missionaries.

As American Baptists, we affirm that the call of God is heard and responded to by women and men, along the full spectrum of racial and ethnic identity.

Galatians 3:28 reminds us, proclaims to us:

***There is neither Jew nor Gentile, neither slave nor free, nor is there male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus.***

As my friend, Rev. Dr. Cheryl Dudley, points out when people evoke Paul's writing about the slave Onesimus, "*We lament that Onesimus was not boldly freed, as far as we know, in his lifetime. We acknowledge the work of the apostles who wrote to churches and pastors, some of whom were women – some mentioned by name, who provided tender, faithful care to their communities of faith.*" If you need more scriptural evidence, I would suggest reading how Jesus interacted, related to, and respected women, in the gospels. It is also rather interesting that the first proclaimers of Christ's resurrection, were women.

We here, at Olympia First Baptist Church, believe and support anyone, women included, who has heard a call from God to go and serve in whatever capacity they feel God is calling them to, including

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being Pastors (that includes Sr. Pastor), Teachers, and Preachers. We believe this is in line with one of our foundational Baptist distinctives, **the Priesthood of All Believers**. That all of us, every single one of us has a calling from God and can, foundationally, minister to one another, in a variety of ways and using the gifts that God has given to us.

As Pastor of this community of ragamuffins, I feel strongly, even if you don't agree with my/our position on the role of women in the church, that I be clear with you, where I am coming from and where we as the church on the corner of 9<sup>th</sup> and Washington stands on this. We live in divisive times, where more and more dividing lines are drawn and/or walls built up. If your friends, family, co-workers ask what kind of Baptists are we? Just smile, tell them we are different, and that we just want to love people, build relationships with them and let them know that they are made in God's image, enough in God's eyes, and deeply, deeply, loved.

Blessings and Joy! – Humble over Hype!

Come and See!

Pastor Mark (Rev)

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### **State of the Church Address/Presentation**

Sunday, July 26<sup>th</sup>, after the Morning Worship service.

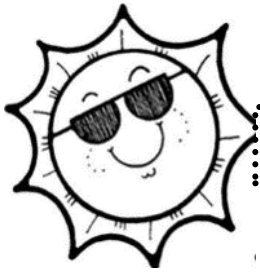
The Executive Leadership Team and Stewardship Team will join Pastor Mark in presenting a "State of the Church" address, for those who are interested, as we come up a little over half of the year.

You will hear a word from the Pastor as well as what each of the Four Main Ministry Teams have been involved in and what each is looking ahead & forward to. We will also be bringing everyone up-to-date on where we sit financially with our giving and overall financial picture after the first six months of 2026.

This is not just about listening to what is shared, but there will also be opportunities to ask clarifying questions or anything you have on your hearts and minds.

In the spirit of transparency, communication, and community building, we hope you will save this date and stick around after worship on

Sunday, July 26<sup>th</sup>!



THE DEACON'S CORNER

Pat Luhr



FINALLY, JUNE and JULY!!! For me, June and July are two very happy months. LIFE IS GOOD! Yes, what a big smile on my face as I walk down the street in my lovely neighborhood. I see all the beautiful flowers in bloom in every yard. Many people are out mowing lawns. (not me) The birds are singing and making a nest. The little squirrels are running across the street. I thank God for all the beauty around me.

Looking back, now over three years ago, I was so very sad and totally worn out. I was looking for a place to move into and I was looking for months, asking for help. But God had his own timeline. I just needed to keep my faith in him. I had some great help from my dear brother Don. He was driving around with me and helping me, we spent a lot of time looking and looking. We found just exactly what I needed, with this house, all my requirements checked off!! I thank God every night for Don and his help. A true answer to prayer.

I am so happy now, because I moved into an older and very beautiful Mobile Home park. It is a perfect place for me, no surprise.

Because I prayed and God answered, and I am sure that others were also praying for me. God came through for me. just when I needed him. God is good.

Where I now live, there are beautiful streets where I walk my dog. Yes my little dog Bruno is very famous to people who live in this neighborhood, they drive by us and they wave! For the first time in many years, I know the names of my close neighbors. They are so friendly and very helpful.

I thank God for my little dog. I thank God for my good health to be able to walk down the street with him. When I pray, I thank God for my friends, and all my family and of course all my church family.



I thank God for June and July, we have some long and sunny days, let's enjoy it. Patti Luhr

Discipleship Project

With summer just kicking off, we are looking ahead to the Fall season and wanting to begin putting together ideas and plans for spiritual growth opportunities. Having a solid foundation, biblically & theologically, helps each of us not only navigate the world around us, but also allows each of us to grow, mature, and even change our understandings and perspectives as God’s story intersects with our own. As we have asked repeatedly this past year:

***Can you be open to the surprises that God’s Spirit might have for you!***

With that in mind, what areas, topics, issues, parts of God’s story, would like to see us offer and/or put together? Because of the busyness of our lives, it feels as if shorter time commitments might be better than say, every week, once a week class or study. That type of feedback on format, is also very helpful in planning and finding facilitators.

We want to provide what works best for the community as well as reflects the interests and needs of the community that will encourage and facilitate spiritual growth and maturity. If that means small groups or home groups or ??, then share that as well. We want to be flexible and adaptable going forward. If that means doing some experimentations, or pilot groups/models, again, we are open, but we need to hear from you!

Discipleship is not just about acquiring head knowledge about the bible or spiritual formation practices. It’s about incorporating those values, principles, learnings, into hands-on, relational, faith-meets-real life-real people circumstances and encounters.

Let us know, so you can – Come and See!

Pastor Mark and the Community Engagement Ministry Team

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**Olympia Commons Day Camp**

**Operation Restoration**

**July 20<sup>th</sup> – 24<sup>th</sup>.**

Deadline to register children or to sign-up as an adult volunteer is July 5<sup>th</sup>!

Go to our church website: [www.fbcolympia.org](http://www.fbcolympia.org)

Go to the “Events” page and you will find two options, one to register your child and the other to register as an adult volunteer.

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## An Evergreen Region Funding Request

The following is meant to be, first, a prayer request.

Church leadership wants you, as a congregation and as individuals, to pray about this. We want to be prayerful and intentional in discerning whatever financial requests we may receive. We want to do so without manipulating, shaming, or guilty anyone. Period!

### ***The Request from the Region:***

***Our Executive Regional Minister, Rev. Doug Avilesbernal, is spending the year doing research for his doctorate in Guatemala. Doug's two boys are enrolled in a local International School. It has been a wonderful place for them to grow and learn while being in a foreign country. In Guatemala, quality schooling is not free, and tuition for the second half of the year will total \$11,000.***

There is a total of 65 churches that make up our American Baptist Churches of the Evergreen Region. Those churches are found in Alaska, Washington, Oregon, California, Idaho, Colorado, Utah as well as one church each in Connecticut, Puerto Rico, and Venezuela. Each of our sister-churches within Evergreen have received this same request. No one is asking a single congregation or person to pay all and/or a significant portion of the tuition cost/need. It is important that you know that by helping with these tuition costs for the Avilesbernal family in full, allows the school to offer spots to low-income families in Guatemala who could not otherwise afford and attend to this level of education.

Please give this some prayer. Pastor Mark will do his best to answer any questions that it might raise for you. The request is being made to both individual congregations as well as to any individual members of those congregations, who may want to respond on their own. The funds raised have a target date of August 1<sup>st</sup>. Church Leadership will decide about what Olympia First Baptist can do collectively, or not, by the end of July. Any feedback you would like to share with them, would be appreciated.

If you decide you want to contribute, individually, after your prayerful consideration, here are your options:

\*You can mail checks to the Evergreen Office: P.O. Box 1044, Kent, WA 98035-1044, with "***Avilesbernal School Funds***" in the memo line, or give online at:

<https://ea-abc.org/give>, and you can add the note in the appropriate space on the checkout page marking this as "Avilesbernal School Funds."

Thank You!



# 2026 CALENDAR

## SPRING CRAFT RETREAT

APRIL 24-26

Bring your craft project!

Director: Rona Schroeder

Fee: \$175

## MEMORIAL DAY WORK WEEKEND

MAY 22-25

A volunteer opportunity!

Director: Bob Holcomb

Fee: \$0

## SR. HIGH CAMP

JULY 12-18

Grades: 9<sup>th</sup> - Grad

FEE: \$375 Early Reg  
\$400 Walk-In

Director: Delynnia Woitt

## JR. HIGH CAMP

JULY 19-25

Grades: 6<sup>th</sup> - 8<sup>th</sup>

FEE: \$375 Early Reg  
\$400 Walk-In

Director: TBA

## ELEMENTARY CAMP

JULY 26-30

Grades: 3<sup>rd</sup> - 5<sup>th</sup>

FEE: \$300 Early Reg  
\$325 Walk-In

Director: Dan Todd

## SR. ADULT CAMP

SEPT. 14-17

Ages: 18 - 99+  
All are welcome!

FEE: \$195

Director: TBA

## FAMILY FISHING WEEKEND

OCTOBER: 2-4

Fun For The Whole Family!

Director: Jeff Scott

Fee: \$175

## CHRISTMAS CRAFT RETREAT

NOV. 20-22

Bring Your Christmas Craft!

Director: Lori Brandt

Fee: \$175

## TURKEY DAY REVIVAL

NOV. 27-29

For Middle & High School Youth

Director: Micah and Jodi Hammond

FEE: \$125

**REGISTER TODAY!**

[www.campbethel.net](http://www.campbethel.net) / [contact@campbethel.net](mailto:contact@campbethel.net) / (360)289-3444

# July 2026 SUNDAY SCHEDULE: 8:30 am Sunday School, 10am Worship, Child Care & Nursery, 3:00pm Table Grace

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
<p>Chair Yoga, Choir &amp; Bible Study on Summer Break  <i>Worship the LORD with gladness;                      come before him with joyful songs.</i>                      - Psalm 100:2 -</p>						
5 10:00 am Communion Sunday Worship Service	6 Chair Yoga on break 7:00-9:30 pm Voices of the Sound Fellowship Hall, Rm 102, Fireside Room	7 11:00am-1pm Lions Club Fireside Room	8 11:15 Staff Meeting	9	10 9:30 am TOPS Rm. 102	11 11:00 am Widows Group Library
12 10:00 am Worship Service  12th - 18th Senior High Camp Camp Bethel	13 7:00-9:30 pm Voices of the Sound Fellowship Hall, Rm 102, Fireside Room	14 11:00am-1pm Lions Club Fireside Room  5:30 pm Woodturners Fellowship Hall	15 11:15 Staff Meeting	16	17 9:30 am TOPS Rm. 102  1:00 pm Ladies Luncheon At Rivers Edge	18 11:00 am Executive Leadership Team Room 102
19 10:00 am Worship Service <b>WINDOWS DEADLINE</b> 19th - 25th Jnr. High Camp Camp Bethel	20 7:00-9:30 pm Voices of the Sound Fellowship Hall, Rm 102, Fireside Room	21 11:00am-1pm Lions Club Fireside Room  6:30pm Stewardship Team Rm 102	22 11:15 Staff Meeting	23	24 9:30 am TOPS Rm. 102	25 Men's Breakfast On hiatus
26 10:00 am Worship Service After Worship: State of the Church Gathering 26th - 30th Elementary Camp Camp Bethel	27 7:00-9:30 pm Voices of the Sound Fellowship Hall, Rm 102, Fireside Room	28 11:00am-1pm Lions Club Fireside Room  5:00 pm Deacon's Meeting Fireside Room	29 11:15 Staff Meeting	30	31 9:30 am TOPS Rm. 102	